

Atlantic Commercial Shark Fishery Update

Below are landings estimates in metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) for the Atlantic shark fisheries for the 1st and 2nd seasons of 2003 (January through June; July through December). These landings estimates include landing reports received as of August 26, 2003. The percent of the quota taken is listed in parentheses under the landings estimate. Dead discards and any over- or underharvests from this season will be totaled and counted against future quotas, as appropriate. Additionally, any unclassified landings are split equally between the ridgeback and non-ridgeback large coastal shark (LCS) species groups. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) may change this allocation of unclassified landings between the ridgeback and non-ridgeback LCS species groups in the future, based on additional data.

| Species Group | 1 st Semi-annual quota level | Estimated landings | 2 st Semi-annual quota level | Estimated landings | Closure Date |
|--|---|--------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| Ridgeback LCS - i.e., sandbar, silky, tiger | 391.5 mt dw | 451.3 mt dw (115%) | 424 mt dw | 211.9 mt dw (50%) | September 15, 2003; 11:30 pm local time |
| Non-Ridgeback LCS - i.e., blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, hammerheads | 465.5 mt dw | 461.1 mt dw (99%) | 498 mt dw | 215.6 mt dw (43%) | |
| Small Coastal Sharks | 163 mt dw | 108.2 mt dw (66%) | 163 mt dw | 51.2 mt dw (31%) | To be determined, as necessary |
| Blue sharks | 136.5 mt dw | 38.7 mt dw (9%) | 136.5 mt dw | 9.4 mt dw (2%) | |
| Porbeagle sharks | 46 mt dw | | 46 mt dw | | |
| Pelagic sharks other than blue or porbeagle | 244 mt dw | | 244 mt dw | | |

NOAA Fisheries has proposed a rule for draft Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks. This proposed rule could affect all shark regulations. The public comment period ends on September 30, 2003. There are six public hearings and one Advisory Panel meeting scheduled. More information on draft Amendment 1 can be found on our web page at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hmspg.html>.

This FAX notice is a courtesy to Atlantic shark fishery interests to keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz at (301)713-2347 x111.

Bruce C. Morehead for
John H. Dunnigan
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

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Dated